

Winter Building Limited by Brick Market Shortage

Open Winter Favorable to Yards; Demand Greater Than Ever Recorded; Only 300 Million Brick on Hand

Hudson River brick manufacturers had held the key to winter building construction activity, according to "The Dow Service Daily Building Reports."

Without common brick the contractor and architect have recourse to concrete in some types of construction enterprises. But there the inquirer for material is confronted by conditions created by the steel and coal strikes, railroad embargoes, harbor congestion and other factors that do not offer him much encouragement. Concrete means reinforcement material and bars ad-

vanced \$5 a ton, or 8 cents, base, Pittsburgh, while cement prices are generally reported to be in upward tendency, probably effective in this market around the first of the year. As a matter of fact conditions in that department warrant a price advance even now.

The alternative of using concrete involves the use of lumber for forms, and there is a new price schedule showing higher levels than even those now ruling that is promised for this month. Price advances in lumber affects wind-sash, doors, rafters, flooring, roofing, etc. Alternatives of these commodities rest in the metal market, which already shows signs of stiffening for a period sufficient to cover clearance of back orders and the rapidly increasing demand for building purposes.

The only commodity upon which an active construction market for this city rests, therefore, is brick—common brick, at least. A few years ago sold in this market at \$5 a thousand, it was sold, dock New York, for about a thousand, laid in a wall. Even at \$1 a thousand, dock, and \$45 a thousand laid in a wall, the market is so famished to-day that a sal was reported in Staten Island at \$20 a thousand, wholesale, with only one cargo available on Saturday.

Production No Greater

One fact stood out prominently, that no more brick arrived at the West Fifty-second Street wholesale docks with the market at \$18 than arrived when the market was at \$14.50 or \$16. Lending brick makers to Charles D. Sillieck to Henry Mahnken a residential lot on Brookside Avenue.

Fifteen days ago the brick manufacturers problem as it was beginning to present itself to them. It was shown that the majority of the manufacturers who can do so believed that they were best conserving the interests of the New York consumer by utilizing all the premium paid men who can still rule at the yards in the manufacture of brick, rather than in loading what brick they have for shipment into this market. Brick can even be shipped by rail in winter, it was argued, but they cannot be made on the open yard after winter sets in. The consensus of the meeting was to that the right thing to do was to produce all the brick while there was time to do so. Any day might see the end of the Hudson brick making season, already protracted long beyond the furthest brick making date the Hudson annuals have yet shown, according to manu-

facturers. Under this plan, it was pointed out whether conditions favored it would be possible to make brick for some time yet and then, just before navigation closed, large flotillas of brick barges could be rushed down the river to be "covered" at local docks, pending purchase, and thus perhaps to break the high prices fostered by present dearth of this important building commodity. These are the building conditions in New York who have been conspicuously absent from the market for the last month, in anticipation of just this contingency, as to offset the advantage that Haverstraw manufacturers might have by reason of their plants being usually accessible to New York all winter, if demand proved sufficiently great to require the extra exertion.

The Hudson River district, according to the brick manufacturers, will close the year with barely 300,000,000 common brick, left from a season that produced only a little more than half the 1,200,000,000 of a normal year. This may be further curtailed if the coal strike is long continued, as soft coal is solely depended upon nowadays for tempering and burning.

The result of this low quantity production is that the entire New York building program for this winter is likely to rest in the hands of a few Haverstraw district brick manufacturers, who will have the responsibility of meeting the biggest winter demand for common brick the district has known in recent years, with the small quantity of supply available. The Hudson River brick industry has never recorded it is unlikely that anything like the supply needed will be brought here by rail. Such added expense would put the price of this commodity under existing conditions around \$50 a thousand laid in a wall, such a price would be prohibitive, even for the biggest building interest.

More Active Building

In the mean time the building construction movement is gaining momentum. There is a fair quantity of cost-plus construction work being awarded, nearly all work to proceed at once, but substantially "on the picket." The fact that the big job has been taken up the job where time is not the first factor. Conditions of supply of materials and temper of labor are not conducive to speedy construction work to-day, and the result of this tendency probably will be that anything like general relief from the housing shortage cannot be expected next year. The extreme conservativeness among the building interests is that under present conditions there can be no hope for a change until the fall of 1921.

Takes a Site in Scarsdale

The Scarsdale Estates, Robert E. Farley president, and Prince & Ripley have sold to Harry W. Thompson of White Plains, a plot in the Murray Hill section of Scarsdale.

Rockville Centre House Sold

George S. Runk has sold for Charles Kiesel his country home with garage, on plot 60x100, at 125 Cedar Avenue, Rockville Centre, L. I.

Recorded Leases

Manhattan

103D ST. 231-35 East, 10th floor, Wm. Hyman to Phillip Zabudowski, 64 West 19th st., 3 yrs. from Nov. 1, 1919, atty. Meyer Levy.

36TH ST. 49 West, 801, Wm. H. Holland to Unionland Realty Corp., 57 West 26th st., 3 yrs. from Nov. 1, 1919, atty. M. L. Hoffman.

35TH ST. 41 West all, Seth H. Meoley to Adolph A. Hirschman, 103 Madison Avenue, 21 yrs. from Nov. 1, 1919, atty. M. L. Hoffman.

45TH ST. 127, all, Denwood Realty Co., 103 Madison Avenue, 21 yrs. from Nov. 1, 1919, atty. M. L. Hoffman.

45TH ST. 127, all, East 135th st., 5 yrs. from Aug. 1, 1919, atty. M. L. Hoffman.

WILLIS AV. 230, all, Purdy Estate, Inc., 103 Madison Avenue, 21 yrs. from July 1, 1920, atty. F. Beck.

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